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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Subject: "MANAGING YOUR MEAT RATIONS" Information from Food Distribution Administration officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Things aren't what they used to be on the kitchen front. Planning meals for the family in wartime has become a challenge to every homemaker. You start to fix one of your favorite dishes and find you haven't a can of pineapple in the house. You go to the grocer with your list all made out...then have to change your menu at the last minute because you can't get this or that for the points you want to spend. Maybe you were a little upset at first, but you put on your best "this-is-war-and-I-must-make-the-most-of-it-expression" and substituted fresh turnip greens for the canned peas you had planned. But some good things are coming out of food shortages and rationing. You, like thousands of other American women, are discovering new foods. Your family is probably eating vegetables that you had never thought of serving before. You're trying new recipes...and to your surprise some of them are just as good....and often better....than your old stand-bys...and they take less butter or other ingredients you thought were so necessary. You are much less wasteful than you were in pre-war days. In fact, your garbage can has gone on a much-needed vacation. Leftovers find their way back to your table in new guises. And another thing rationing has done....it has let you find out that many of the fruits, vegetables and other foods you served only occasion-ally before often have more nutritive value than those that had been a habit in your household. All in all, you have learned that even when you can't buy as much of some things as you would like, you can feed your family a nutritious, well-balanced diet with a little more planning and with more careful shopping and cook-ing.

With the new Red Stamp Ration Program just beginning your greatest concern in the next few weeks will be managing your meat supply. And you want to get off on the right foot. Here are some tips. Study your Point Ration table to become familiar with the point values of every kind of meat. Don't make the mistake of splurging on steak and coming out short on butter and fats. Here are some general suggestions that will be of help. First of all make the most of the meats and other protein food not under rations. Poultry is one of the meats not rationed. So if you have been in the habit of thinking of roast chicken or turkey as strictly a holiday dish, better change your mind. Serve poultry as often as you can to save your points for other things. Duck, goose, squab and guinea also make excellent main dishes, and, of course, they are not rationed. For help in cooking poultry, send for the free bulletin called "Poultry Cooking". No. 1888. Address your request to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Fresh fish is another of the unrationed foods that should find its way to your table often. Of course, it takes a little daring on the part of inlanders to try new fish, but most people become quite fond of new fish dishes after they have eaten them a few times. Just remember....people along the coast have always liked fish. There must be a good reason for that. Use local varieties of fish when you can, but don't be shy about trying new kinds.

Another way to make your meat supply go a long way is to stretch the good meat flavor in mixed dishes. Use meat extenders -- that is, mix your meat with bulky, mild-flavored foods like cereals, bread, vegetables, and sauces. Loaves, patties, pot roasts with vegetables, stews, meat pies, soups, chowders and stuffings are the answer. You can make these dishes of meats that are low in point value, and if you make them properly they are delicious.

While we are thinking about low point values in meat, let's talk about the variety meats. Variety meats are the heart, liver, kidney, brains, tongue, sweetbread, and the other meat specialities. These meats are too perishable for ship-

ping to our military forces overseas, so you can get them on the market at comparatively low point values. By the way, if you have been used to serving your family only calves' liver, try beef and pork liver for a change. You will generally find beef and pork liver much less expensive. Many people prefer these to calves' liver.

Speaking of low-point meats don't forget about pigs feet....sometimes so expressively called pig's "trotters". Although pig's feet are an old story to many people, they may be new to you. If you haven't eaten them, you have a surprise coming. When cooked properly they are delicious...considered a delicacy by many people. Don't let the fact that pigs feet are at the bottom of the list in point value (1 point a pound) make you hesitate about buying them. And pig's feet aren't by any means the end of the pig story. In fact, practically everything except the squeal is coming to the table these days. Jowls, ears and even the tail are good eating. Just try them...you'll probably go back to the butcher for more.

Now for some food that you can use as meat alternates. To fill in you'll want to call on eggs especially, because they aren't rationed as well as cheese and dried beans, peanuts and soybeans. Cottage cheese and other soft cheese are not under rationing. Like meat these foods all make a good stick-to-the-ribs dishes around which to build a meal. They all contain protein, along with one or more of the other food values found in meat...and usually extra food values of their own.

You can find information to help you make the most of your meat rations in several free publications from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Along with the bulletin on cooking poultry, mentioned a moment ago, you can order a free folder called "Egg Dishes at Low Cost"...another called "Cheese in Your Meals"...and last but not least, a bulletin called "Meats for Thrifty Meals", No. 1908, if you want to order by number. There you have help on meat dishes.... poultry...egg...and cheese dishes, all free, all from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.